ALMA RECORD.

C M. FLEMING Editor and Proprietor.

ALMA, : : : MICH.

GENERAL NOTES.

EARL OF GRANVILLE,

British Secretary of foreign affairs and leade of the Liberal party in England.

A STATUE of Gen. Garfield has just been completed by a well-known sculptor of Cincinnati, who has been engaged on the work for over three years. The statue is to be erected on Custom House square in Cincinnati.

A railroad indicator has been devised by a New York man, its purpose being to show the exact time when trains pass a station. The invention is thus described: "The indicator is composed of a clock set in a case about eight feet above the ground. The dial looks like an ordinary clock; the hands are stationary, except when a train passes on the track where the indicator is attached, when the hands suddenly move to the hour, minute and second, giving the correct time when the train passes. The hands point at this time until another train passes, when they move ahead as before."

As an evidence of the work being done for the unfortunates in our cities and villages a report was made at the conference of charities and corrections held in Washington recently showing that there is nearly $8,000,000 invested in juvenile reformatories and that there are 11,000 inmates supported by them at an annual cost of $1,500,000. The same report recommended that some from of employment be given the inmates of these juvenile reformatories in order to make them partially self-supporting, and that when released and again brought in contact with the world's life, habits of industry shall have been formed which will be a bulwark against temptation.

In nearly every city and village in the United States numbers of children are engaged in the collection of postage stamps. It is at least harmless and is even quite capable of teaching them geography and perhaps a little history. Of course it is easy to impose upon them. They have no expert knowledge of the articles they deal in. In New York city alone it is estimated that 12,000 children in the public schools are engaged in the collection of stamps. This offers such a tempting field to work that, it is said, several firms are engaged in the manufacture of bogus stamps, thus swindling the children. The postoffice authorities will investigate the subject and if the business comes under the regulations will probably prohibit the use of the mails to the fraudulent dealers.

UNDER the shade of cottonwood trees in Santa Fe a tourist lately saw fifty Indian boys and girls taking their first lesson in gymnastic exercises, designed to make them less awakward in deportment. A bright young American girl was the instructress, and it was highly diverting to see the eagerness with which these unfortunate children followed her movements. The boys were as pleased with their first jackets and trousers as any Yankee lad on emerging from petticoats and long curls. Nor were the Indian girls less proud of their skirts and their well fitting shoes. Stockings, the observer noticed, were likely to come down, a trick which the girls evidently thought to be characteristic of stockings, but they got plenty of exercise in pulling them up into place.

T. C. PYLE, a Tennessee pedagogue, writes to a paper published in an Ohio town, where nobody knows what his reputation for the truth may be, the following account of the finding of a cave by a party of railway engineers: The cave was explored for a considerable distance. At the entrance was discovered an inscription in Hebrew characters. After passing some 300 yards into the cave it enlarged into a great amphitheater. Still further in was found an appalling sight that struck terror to the hearts of the explorers. There, on the right and left and in front, were thousands of grinning skeletons, encased in brass armor with ponderous shields. Not less than 5,000 skeletons were seen, each of which was reclining on his shield. They presented the appearance of men killed in battle, who had been brought there for burial. A large brass box contained manuscript which none of the party could read, but which is supposed to be the record of their wanderings.

"New Jersey" and "Maryland" are to be the names of the new cruisers, for whose building congress appropriated funds last winter. One sentimentalist wanted to call them "McAdoo" and "Talbot," after the members from the aforesaid states who managed the bills.

QUEEN MARGARET AND KING MALCOLM.

GEORGE WEATHERLY.

Quiver for December.

["Margaret was her warlike husband's teacher in the faith of Christ; and often she would read the New Testament to him, explaining its divine lessons of humility, charity, and piety."]

In the grand historic pages
Of the records of the past
There are pictures of dark ages,
That we love to think will last.

Then man battled fiercely, madly,
But, in every lull from strife,
Margaret taught her husband gladly
From the precious Book of Life.

Such a picture, lit with glory,
Like a jewel richly set,
Gleams before us in the story
Of the Scotch queen, Margaret.

When the world was waiting dumbly,
Seeking vainly for a guide,
This good queen was gazing humbly
At the the Saviour crucified.

Often Malcolm Canmore listened
To the story of the cross,
Till with tears his fierce eyes glistened
Till he counted glory loss.

Pleasant picture this we're keeping—
One we love and gaze upon.
Bringing harvest worth the reaping
From the ages that are gone.

APOSTROPHE TO NIGHT.

MRS. E. V. WILSON.

St. Louis Magazine.

O! night, I watched so patiently for they,
With thy cool darkness and thy silent stars.
The sun went out beyond his western bars,
"And now," I said, "the night will comfort me,
And care, and sorrow from my heart will flee.
But, ancient friend, thou hast deceived me so,
I long for morn to come that then may'st go,
And I no more thy haunting ghosts may see
With their sad eyes, whence tears have ceased to flow.
Better the day, its sunshine, crowds and glare,
Than the pale things with faces of despair
That came with thee and mock me in my woe.
Henceforth, O! night, a dreadful foe thou'lt be,
For thou hast leagued thyself with memory."

THE WOMAN IN RED.

A Thrilling Italian Story of the Last Century.

BY GEORGE W. M. REYNOLDS.

CHAPTER II.

FRANCESCA AND COUNT CLAUDIO.

Some of the crowd dispersed, among whom were Bravadura and Spada, but Fiaramonte remained.

"He will surely pass this way presently," he said, "nor will *she* be long behind him. I know this is their trysting-place. Count Claudio little thinks that the father of Francesca Donati, instead of being the wealthy noble he is thought, is utterly ruined. 'Twas a singular chance by which I gained the information; I will use it. The young Count has shown me kindness; and bad though I be, gratitude is not yet dead in my breast. He has served me; I will now serve him."

While he was thus thinking, Count Claudio approached; and halting in the square, looked around as though expecting some one.

"Count Claudio, a word with you," said Fiaramonte, going up to him.

"What now, fellow?" said the Count, haughtily. "What would you with me?"

"You do not know me, Count; no matter—I know you. You once did me a kindness; I can now return it."

"Ha! speak on."

"You are waiting here for the Lady Francesca Donati, daughter of the Count and Countess of that name. Am I not right?"

"How knew you my private affairs? This is an impertinence."

"It is not so meant. What I have to say concerns the Count Donati."

"Speak on."

"He is reputed wealthy—is it not so?"

"It is."

"He is a beggar."

"Impossible! He is immensely rich?"

"So people think; but they are wrong. Listen to my words, Count Claudio. This morning, the Countess Donati received a letter from Venice, where the Count is, and this letter contained the news that he is utterly ruined and that his only hope was that she might borrow a hundred and fifty thousand ducats, and remit to him at once. She has endeavored to do so in several places, and failed."

"A hundred and fifty thousand ducats! The Count utterly ruined! It seems impossible. How know you this, my good fellow?"

"I cannot give my authority, but what I say you may rely upon."

"This is most marvelous," said Count Claudio to himself. "Can it, indeed, be true? If so, it is most desperately unfortunate. I love Francesca; but I am deeply in debt, and to wed her without the promised dowry would be madness. I dare not; and yet how can I relinquish her?—so lovely and so loving; her gentle heart would break."

Neither Count Claudio nor Fiaramonte observed the door of Rudiga's house open, and herself upon the threshold. But the people who still remained noticed her, and shrank back awe-stricken at the terrible looks of the supposed sorceress. She heard all the conversation relating to the ruin of Count Donati, and more which afterward passed between Claudio and the other. Then, apparently satisfied, she drew back and closed the door.

While the young Count and Fiaramonte were yet conversing another personage appeared on the scene. This was a lady dressed in black and closely veiled. She advanced to a group standing some distance from the house and asked:

"Can you direct me to the abode of one Rudiga, a fortune-teller?"

"The Women in Red!—the sorceress!" cried several. "Yes, madam—it is there."

The lady hesitated, as if uncertain whether to advance or not.

"Thus thickly veiled," she muttered to herself, "no one would recognize the Countess Constanza Donati. I must adventure it. 'Tis our last hope. This woman—this sorceress—they say, possesses fabulous wealth. I will bring my diamonds, my jewels, and offer them as security for the money I require. It is a fortunate idea, and I see in it the means of our salvation. I will hasten for them and return."

No sooner had she gone than Fiaramonte, who had been intently watching her, and who seemed struck by her voice and appearance, said to Count Claudio:

"Count, know you the purpose of that woman's visit here?"

"Not I," was the careless reply: "perhaps to have her fortune told."

"No, it is not to have her fortune told, but to borrow money."

"To borrow money? Indeed! And how does that interest me?"

"She comes to borrow 150,000 ducats."

"A large sum, truly, but nothing to me."

"Know you who the lady is?"

"Not I: nor do I care."

"Do not be too sure. It is the Countess Constanza Donati, mother of the Lady Francesca."

"Ha! say you so? Are you sure?"

"Quite."

"And her object?"

"I have told you."

"Can it be so? What means have you of knowing?"

"I cannot tell you; but trust me, I speak truth."

"It is strange, very strange," mused Count Claudio. "The fellow has the air of truth."

"See who comes yonder across the bridge," said Fiaramonte, interrupting him, and pointing with his finger.

"Ha! 'tis she—Francesca—my heart's love!"

"Remember, Count, she's no longer the wealthy heiress, but the daughter of a ruined man."

"Perdition seize the thought! it is madness. I cannot give her up; and yet to wed her would be rank folly. My affairs are now in so bad a state as to make a marriage with a wealthy lady absolutely indispensable."

Such were the muttered thoughts of the young Count Claudio as, torn by conflicting emotions—swayed now by his love, now by his interest and the desperate nature of his fortunes—his mind wandered first one way, then the other. But as the fair Francesca Donati approached, self-interest and expediency melted away, until in the sunshine of her presence he lived but for her.

He hastened to meet her.

"Francesca! dearest, best beloved, again I behold you! Your bright beauty has dissipated the gloom which was gathering around. I am again happy."

"Happy! Have you, then, been otherwise, Claudio?"

"No, no, Francesca! not unhappy. How could I be so when blessed with your love? But I have heard things which disquieted me concerning your father, Francesca."

"Ah! I trust nothing is wrong. Do you know, Claudio, that my mother has been all day in a terrible state of excitement? But a short time ago she came to me and asked for my diamond tiara. What can it mean?"

Claudio groaned inwardly.

"It is, then, true," he thought. "She is about to sell her jewels in order to raise the money." But not wishing to alarm her, he dissembled his feelings.

"Oh, doubtless it is merely some trifling anxiety, dear Francesca," he said. "Do not suffer it to trouble you."

"But it does trouble me, Claudio," said the young girl.

"Do you know, I often think that my dear mother has some secret grief which weighs her down. Frequently, on looking up suddenly, I notice her regarding me in a mournful manner, her eyes suffused with tears; and once or twice she has let fall expressions as though she feared to lose me. What can it mean?"

The eyes and ears of Claudio were so taken up with his fair companion, that he paid but little attention to other objects. And sooth to say, the fair Francesca might be pleaded as an excuse for any amount of inadvertance to what was passing around.

Seldom even among the daughters of sunny Italy was so perfect a specimen of feminine beauty to be found. Unlike the generality of her countrywomen, she was not dark, but fair. Her hair was of a light-brown color, her eyes dark blue, her complexion a happy blending of the blonde and brunette, with all the transparency and delicacy of the former, wanting the pallor which so often characterizes fair beauties. Her features were faultless in outline, while the expression was so soft and lovable as to double the effect of her great beauty. The type of her face was neither the Grecian nor the Italian style of beauty, but rather a mixture of both, with perhaps the aquiline predominating. However, giving up the task of description as hopeless, we must leave the reader to imagine the graces of her form and beauty, the small classic head, bound round with luxuriant masses of hair; the delicate hands, small feet, gently swelling bust, and taper waist; limbs modeled after the antique; and all the various graces with which Dame Nature had taken delight in adorning her.

Claudio was endeavoring to dispel her melancholy and forebodings, she drinking in his words, which fell like music on her ear, when both were startled by a voice close beside them.

"Lady, your hand, and I will tell your fortune."

Francesca, turning quickly, gave utterance to a faint cry.

There, close beside her, stood the dreaded sorceress, known as Rudiga, the Woman in Red. Her eyes were bent on the young girl's face with a penetrating glance, which seemed to exercise a strange, weird charm.

Francesca shuddered involuntarily, she knew not why.

"Your hand, young lady," said the reputed sorceress again, while a smile full of strange meaning broke out on her face.

There was something so tender in her words, so melancholy a pathos in the smile which accompanied them, that the girl felt reassured, and, though not without misgiving, extended her little hand to the fortune-teller.

The latter was murmuring to herself words which neither Francesca nor Claudio could understand, never for an instant removing her eyes from her face—those dark, flashing eyes, which seemed as though they would read the inmost heart of all upon whom their glance fell.

Let us listen to the murmured thoughts of the Woman in Red:

"The voice of nature is strong within me. I feel an inward conviction that at last I behold my child. The chain of evidence is not complete, but my heart tells me I am right."

"Come, come," said Claudio, roughly interrupting her; "release the lady's hand. What means this idle mummery?"

Rudiga removed her eyes from Francesca, and turned her angry gaze on the young Count.

"Rash young man, beware how you offend me."

"What! do you threaten me? Away with you! I fear not your mock spells and enchantments—'tis all imposture, as is thy fortune-telling."

"They call you Count Claudio," she said, "do they not?"

"Call me Count Claudio! What mean you, woman?"

"Do you remember your mother?" she asked, abruptly, fixing her eyes on his face.

"My mother?—no. She died while I was yet too young. But a truce to this idle folly; begone, woman, or I will have you scourged through the streets."

Rudiga's eyes flashed fire. She dropped the hand of Francesca, and confronted Claudio, defiantly.

"Empty-brained coxcomb, you dare to threaten me! Beware! you know not who you are. I know——"

"What know you?"

"More than I choose to say at your bidding. You think yourself nobly born, do you not? I know better; your mother was an honest but poor village woman, and I held her in my arms as she yielded up her life, murdered——"

"Vile impostor, you lie!"

"I have bid you beware how you anger me; again I repeat the warning."

"I defy you and your pretended arts. Come, Francesca, let us leave this mad woman, or I shall be compelled to order her arrest."

Rudiga suddenly clutched Francesca by the arm.

"Stay; you go not so. What would you with this girl? What claim have you on her? The voice of nature is strong within me. I know her mother."

"What raving is this? You know her mother, the Countess Donati? I do not believe it."

"It is false; her mother was not the Countess Donati."

"Unhand the lady, vile wretch," cried Claudio, furiously.

"By what right do you dare tell me to do so—me—*me?* Who are you that claim her? Know you who she is?"

Francesca, pale and trembling, was almost ready to faint while this violent scene went on. The populace, too, crowded around, attracted by the altercation between the sorceress and Count Claudio.

Rudiga was rapidly working herself up to a pitch of ungovernable excitement. Instead of releasing Francesca, she held her arm with yet firmer grip.

"The woman is mad—mad!" exclaimed Claudio, trying to drag Francesca away.

"No, no; not mad, rash boy. You know not who she is. See—see by this token I know her."

Then, as quick as thought, she tore the dress from Francesca's left shoulder, leaving the flesh bare. A sharp cry, almost a shriek, broke from the Woman in Red.

"I knew it—I knew it—it's she," and then, before Francesca, who was dreadfully terrified, could escape, she cried, "I have found you at last."

Claudio now rushed forward and attempted by force to drag Rudiga away. He succeeded in his object; but in the struggle an ivory cross which Francesca wore around her neck became detached, and remained in the hand of the so-called sorceress. Claudio cried out, furiously:

"Sacrilege! Sacrilege! This accursed Jewish sorceress has torn a crucifix from the bosom of a Christian maiden."

Then arose on all sides the cry:

"Sacrilege!—sacrilege! Stone her down her—the witch."

And with these words the mob crowded around Rudiga, and she was in imminent danger of her life. But just when her peril seemed most imminent, and even as the foremost of the crowd were aiming blows at her, Francesca rushed forward with a shriek.

"No, no," she cried, "do not harm her. It was an accident: the poor woman did not mean to steal the cross. You shall not harm her. If she must die, I will die with her."

The mob, but a moment before intent on murder, fell back before the magic of Francesca's bright beauty, and Rudiga, the Woman in Red, owed her safety to the Christian maiden.

"'Tis the voice of nature," cried Rudiga. "Naomi, Naomi, come to my arms. You were lost, and are found."

But for Francesca this was quite unintelligible. She had pitied the poor woman, whom she feared to have seen killed before her eyes, and had, therefore, not without risk to herself, saved her from the fury of the mob. But as to the meaning of this strange woman's vehement demonstrations of affection to herself, and her calling her "Naomi," she was in utter ignorance. She could only think her mad, and was glad when she could escape from her embrace, and be escorted home by Claudio.

CHAPTER III.

THE ROBBERS BREAK INTO RUDIGA'S HOUSE.

It is night, and Rudiga, the Jewess, the sorceress, is alone in her house—alone communicating with her own thoughts, which are of a gloomy and somber nature. Leaning her cheek on her hand, she has sunk into a deep reverie—so deep that she remains insensible to all external objects, wrapped up in sad memories and visions of the past. She hears not, as she sits alone and disconsolate, a noise as of the window gently raised; nor does she see a man cautiously enter the room. He must have climbed from without, and, removing the shutter, gained entrance in that way. What can his object be? Robbery—at least, probably so; for we behold in this man our old acquaintance, Hubert Malissey, *Bravadura*. He is masked, and his footsteps are silent and stealthy as those of a cat as he advances into the room. Scarcely has he entered than he is followed by another man, also masked, and then another, till three stand in the dimly-lighted apartment silent and motionless as spirits.

On our readers' behoof we will lift the mask of those other two, and reveal the countenances of Hector Fiaramonte and Spada.

The three gazed on the Woman in Red with surprise, mingled with awe. She sees them not. What can it mean? Is she asleep? No, her eyes are open.

While they are wondering and doubting, she raises her head from her hand, and calmly turns her gaze upon them.

"What want you here?" she asks, not in the least dismayed, but in the same cold, hard tones which ever distinguished her voice.

"Ha! ha! that's good. We'll show you what we want. Come, comrades, one of you stand by her while we search. Give a few inches of steel if she attempts to move or raise an outcry."

It was the bold ruffian Bravadura who spoke; but Rudiga seemed scarcely to heed his words. Then the other two commenced to search the place.

"The keys—give us your keys," cried Bravadura, in low, threatening tones, as he observed the other two trying in vain to open the lid of a huge wooden chest.

She took a bundle of keys from her girdle and contemptuously tossed them on the ground.

Then they began the search anew, and proceeded to ransack the wooden chest and all the cupboards and looked places they could find. But their hopes of gold and valuables were doomed to be disappointed.

The sorceress regarded them all the while with a calm and contemptuous glance, as though well aware they would find nothing.

Their unsuccessful search concluded, the trio drew into one corner of the room, and held a whispered conversation.

"You said she was wealthy; the old hag has not got a scudi or a scudi's worth in the place."

Thus Bravadura addressed Hector Fiaramonte, in low, growling tones of intense disgust.

"And so she is—rich as Cœsus. I knew her three years ago in Leghorn. She there lent the son of the Grand Duke of Tuscany half a million ducats in one sum to pay his gambling debts. It was all repaid her with large interest. Besides, has she not lent large sums in this very city? Do I not know that the young Count Claudio is heavily in her debt?"

"Perdition seize it! and yet we cannot find a ducat."

"What is it you require?" asked the Jewess, sternly; "what do you seek?"

"What do we seek! Why, money, of course."

"Why did you not say so? Here," and she took a purse from her pocket, and flung the contents contemptuously on the ground. "There is gold; take it and begone."

Bravadura and Spada instantly began scrambling for the money; but Hector Fiaramonte folded his arms, and stood aloof with an air of pride and dignity almost laughable.

Rudiga regarded him with curiosity.

"Well, robber," she said, "why do not you too scramble for gold?"

"I care not for such paltry work. As for me, I am a bad fellow, doubtless; but I fly only at high game. Let the common herd content themselves with a few gold pieces. I came to gain at least a thousand; and as there seems little chance of my succeeding in so doing"—he shrugged his shoulders—"I must rest content without."

"Ah!" she cried, rising, as a sudden thought seemed to strike her; "you seem a likely fellow. Would you like to earn a thousand ducats with but little trouble?"

"Would I?—would I not?"

"Are you to be trusted?"

"Try me."

"I have a great mind to."

She advanced toward him as she spoke, and taking him unawares suddenly made a snatch at the black velvet mask he wore.

"Let me see your face."

He attempted to prevent her, but was too late.

The other two robbers rushed forward with drawn knives.

"Betrayed! betrayed! she has seen the face of one of us, and must die!" said Bravadura, raising his hand, and attempting to reach the Jewess.

"Hold! hold!" cried Fiaramonte "I have business with her. I do not mind my face being seen; were it as ugly as yours I might."

"Begone!" said the Jewess, pointing to the window. "Take your gold and go: I have business with this man. Fear not: I shall not trouble after you."

The two villains retired, grumbling, and made their escape by the same way as they came.

"Your name?" asked Rudiga, as soon as they were again alone.

"Hector Fiaramonte."

She looked him hard in the face.

"False," she said; "it is Victor Sanson."

"Ah!" he cried; "how know you that?"

She pointed above with her finger.

"The stars, which never lie."

"I have not borne the name for fifteen years," he muttered, half to himself.

"I know it. Do you remember sixteen years ago, on the 24th of June, in the village of Castellan?"

"I do."

"Do you remember a crime you committed on that day?"

"Who are you who tell me these things? How know you this?"

"No matter who I am; I know. Do you remember, on that day a poor Jewish woman was robbed of her child, and the woman who had charge of the child murdered?"

Great drops of perspiration rolled down his forehead, and he turned deadly pale.

"I remember," he said; "but do the stars tell you I committed the murder?"

"They do not."

"Ah! I breathe again."

"But you know who did the deed."

He was silent.

"What became of the child?"

"I know not, so help me Heaven!"

"You know not! And had you never thought of the poor mother's feelings thus bereaved? Had you never thought on the enormity of the crime?"

"Listen to me, mysterious woman. I will tell the truth. I was offered a share in five hundred ducats to procure a female child of between eight and nine months old. I was told the infant would be adopted by a noble lady, and reared in the lap of luxury. I was poor, and consented, but since that time I have repented often. That alone of all my misdeeds weighs down my soul with remorse."

"And you wish to earn a thousand ducats?"

"Do I not, considering that I have not five scudi in my purse?"

"And would you also repair the wrong you have done at the same time as you earned this money?"

"I would."

"Listen to me: you say you know not what has become of the child that was stolen on the day of Margaret d'Arbel's murder?"

"I have not the least idea."

"I have. I know where the girl is now."

"The devil you do!" said Hector carelessly. "Well, what do you wish me to do?"

"I wish you to repair the wrong you have done. Carry her off from her supposed mother and restore her to the real one."

"*Capo di Bacco!*" said Fiaramonte, twirling his mustach; "the affair is simple, and suits me exactly. It is not the first time I have carried off young girls, for other purposes than to restore them to their mothers."

"You are willing to undertake it, then?"

"What, for a thousand ducats? Aye, I'll carry off half a dozen girls for less money. What is the girl's name, and who is her supposed mother?"

"She is called Francesca Donati; and her false mother is the Countess of that name."

"What, the Lady Francesca, the betrothed of Count Claudio!" he exclaimed in surprise.

"The same; but he shall never wed her."

"You would not separate them?"

"Would I not! perish the thought that *he* should ever call her his. You accept the offer?"

He paused for some time ere replying.

"Listen," he said, presently. "I am a rascal, it is true, but not so black a one as some might think. The young Count Claudio has been kind to me; I would rather perish on the scaffold than harm him in person or spirit. He loves this girl Francesca Donati—loves her passionately, fondly, madly. I will not thwart his love, though I lose a thousand ducats."

"Listen man," she cried, with earnestness, and grasping his arm. "You are poor; I offer you money, easily earned, merely for doing a good action, and retrieving the wrong you have already done. I will double the sum—two thousand ducats."

Fiaramonte folded his arms, and replied stoically:

"I will not do aught to harm Count Claudio."

"Five thousand ducats!" she almost shrieked.

"I am a poor fellow, and a vagabond, it is true; but I have a heart; and though it cost me five thousand ducats, I will not aid in thwarting Count Claudio in his love. It is an expensive luxury, I grant; but in refusing this money, my conscience tells me I am doing a good, a noble action. I love Count Claudio, and will risk death in his service. Madame, I wish you good-night."

Then Fiaramonte bowed like a hero of tragedy, strode to the door, opened it, and went out.

* * * * * * *

"Baffled again," murmured the Woman in Red when he had left. "I will see what fate has in store. The cards—the stars with which I blind the credulous multitude—*sometimes* tell the truth."

Then she took a pack of cards, and, spreading them on the ground, proceeded to read them.

"Ha!" she exclaimed, rising, after a brief manipulation: "the cards tell me that the first person who enters this house shall restore me my daughter. I will wait and see."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

The Tell-Tale.

St. Nicholas.

It is a well known fact that our muscles are more or less influenced, unconsciously to ourselves, by the thoughts with which our minds are occupied. Sometimes this influence amounts to what would almost seem an unconscious control by our will over inanimate things. An amusing experiment, which proves this and has served to pleasantly occupy many a long winter evening, we have for lack of a better name, christened the "Tell-tale."

With the aid of a pair of compasses or a pencil and a bit of string, carefully draw two concentric half-circles, that is, from the same center, and one about half an inch within another. The size of the design makes but little difference, but the result is more easily seen if the diagram is as large as convenient. Divide this double half circle into a number of compartments, and in each place a letter of the alphabet, a numeral, or a name, as the fancy may dictate; the object being that there shall be no possible mistaking of one compartment for another. Rule straight lines from each compartment to the common center. Now take a small button—a shoe button is as good as any—and fasten a bit of fine silk thread about eight inches long to it, making a knot in each end of the thread. Now let one of the party take the thread by the end, and hold it so far above the figure that the button shall hang about an inch and a half above the paper. Let him fix his mind firmly upon one of the compartments and then close his eyes. Very soon the button will develop a perpendicular-like motion, and before long generally about three minutes, it will begin to move toward the compartment of which the holder is thinking. It really seems, at the first glance, that the button is influenced by the unconscious exertion of will on the part of the experimenter. But close investigation will reveal the fact that the hand moves with a slight tremulous motion, which, being transmitted through the fine thread, moves the button. Much amusement can be had by putting the names of people in the compartments, and then seeing of which one the experimenter is thinking.

Another experiment of kindred interest is to suspend a plain gold ring on a piece of silk thread in a common tumbler, holding the hand and arm straight, and thinking of a certain number. It is claimed that with the mind concentrated on such a number the string will begin to oscillate, and the ring will presently strike against the inner sides of the glass the number thought of.

While these experiments are interesting and afford much amusement, it must be admitted that they do not always work as they should. It must be remembered that whether we accept the theory of involuntary muscular action or attribute the results to "will-power," or "animal magnetism," or "electricity," we are experimenting with forces which the greatest scientists have never been able to explain satisfactorily.

The Hindoo Idea of Marriage.

A Hindoo has curious ideas as to the married state. Here is a husband's creed: "A man, both day and night, must keep his wife so much in subjection that she by no means be mistress of her own actions. If the wife have her own free will, notwithstanding she is of a superior caste she will go amiss. A woman shall never go out of her house without the consent of her husband, and shall pay proper respect to her husband's father, the spiritual guide, and her guests, and shall not eat until she has served them with victuals (if it is medicine, she may take it before they eat); a woman shall never go to a stranger's house, and shall never stand at the door, and must never look out of the window. If a woman, following her inclinations, goes wheresoever she chooses, and does not regard the words of her master, such a woman should be turned away. If a man goes on a journey, his wife shall not divert herself by play, nor see any public show, nor laugh, nor dress herself with jewels or fine clothes, nor see dancing, nor hear music, nor sit at the window, or ride out, nor behold anything choice or rare; but shall fasten well the house door and remain private, and shall not eat any dainty victuals, and shall not view herself in a mirror; she shall not exercise herself in any agreeable employment during the absence of her husband."

There are explorers in Africa cut off from civilization by the war in the Soudan. They are Dr. E. Junker, the ethnologist, Dr. Emil Holub, naturalist and explorer of a part of the Zambesi basin, Dr. Emin, explorer and governor of the equatorial province of Egypt, Sig. Casati, the Italian traveler, and a few who are with them as assistants. Where they are is unknown.

HOUSEHOLD HINTS.

Leather book-bindings may be revived by rubbing them with white of egg.

The grated rind and the juice of an orange add much to the flavor of ginger cake.

Burnt umber, with a little Venetian red mixed with porter, makes a good oak stain.

Flat fish, as a rule, keep better than round: they should be chosen for their thickness rather than for their size.

Velveteen makes very handsome table scarfs. It may be embroidered in the same way as velvet and may be lined with sateen.

Brass, when corroded and blackened, may be cleaned with rotten-stone, moistened with oxalic acid and water; polish with whiting or silicon.

A sure test for eggs is the following: Dissolve one ounce of salt in ten ounces of water and put the eggs in. Good eggs will sink and bad ones will float.

Vegetables, when fresh, are crisp. Cucumbers must be perfectly firm and stiff. Celery breaks off clean when fresh; if it is stringy it has been kept too long.

In choosing mutton or veal from the carcass the quality may be determined from the fat inside the thigh. If there be plenty of clear, firm fat there, the meat is good.

A few drops of ammonia will be effectual in removing grease from the dishpan, and it is a good plan once in a while to add a little to the water used to cleanse the sink.

While it is conceded by most cooks that winter squash is best when baked, it is always necessary to use judgment about it, for if the squash is very dry it is rendered almost tasteless by cooking. In this case it should be steamed.

Veal should have firm white fat and the lean have a pinkish tinge. If the barbarism of bleeding has been practiced, the flesh will be quite white. Veal should be six or eight weeks old before it is killed, else it is unwholesome. Too young veal may be detected by a bluish tint.

An old and reliable test for the purity of milk is to dip a smoothly-polished knitting needle into a cup of milk and withdraw it in an upright position. If the milk be pure a pendulous drop of the liquid will hang to the end of the needle; there will be no drop adhering to the needle if even a small quantity of water be mixed with the milk.

To clean and freshen old matting rub it with a cloth wet in salt water, being careful not to allow any drops of water to dry in the matting, as they will leave spots difficult to remove. Heavy, varnished furniture should never rest directly upon the matting, for even good varnish, becoming soft in warm weather will stain the straw. Matting may be turned if the loose ends of the cords are threaded in a large needle and drawn through to the other side.

Chickens prepared in this way are a change from the usual fricassee: Cut up two young chickens, cook them for half an hour in a saucepan with a little bacon cut in dice, adding thyme, two bay leaves, a small onion, parsley and a piece of butter, moistening with white wine. Mix the yolk of three eggs in half a cup of cream and pour the mixture over the chickens, taking the saucepan instantly off the fire. Arrange the pieces of chickens symmetrically on a dish and serve.

In choosing fish see that the gills are bright pink, the fins stiff, and the eyes clear and full; the scales and skin must be bright. Lobsters and crabs must be chosen by their weight as compared with their size. When fresh, the tail of a lobster will quickly spring back into position after it is straightened. A medium-sized lobster, with narrow tail and heavy for its size, will be found to be choice. In buying part of a large fish, its freshness may be known by the bluish tinge of the flesh and the iridescence of the cut part. It is not fresh if the flesh be yellow.

This dessert is easily made and is very nice: One quart of apple sauce or eight tart apples stewed soft, with one cupful of water and strained. Add one cup of granulated sugar, half a teaspoonful of vanilla or lemon extract and the yolks of four eggs, well beaten. Put the mixture in a buttered pudding dish and bake twenty minutes in a quick oven. Beat the four whites to a stiff froth and add two tablespoonfuls of powdered sugar. Spread this over the hot pudding and brown very lightly. Serve when ice cold, with sponge cake or delicate biscuits. It may be eaten with cream.

Good beef, when fresh, has a fine grain and is of a vermilion color, with a slight tint of purple on the cut surface. It is firm, but tender to the touch, and is so elastic that no mark is left after pressure from the finger. The fat is yellowish-white, like fresh butter, and firm. Sometimes the lean is slightly veined with fat, but it must have no flavor of suet. The surface must be quite dry when cut, scarcely moistening the finger. If a clean knife be pushed up to the handle into the raw meat, the resistance will be uniform if it be fresh; but, if some of the parts are softer than others, it has begun to decompose. When beef is lean, coarse and sinewy-looking, it is old and tough. Cow-beef is coarse-looking and has white fat.

A Shower of Birds.

Special to *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*:

A terrific rain and wind storm swept over Central Mississippi, on the night of the 2d inst. It came from a northwesterly direction and lasted several hours, blowing down trees, fences and outhouses, and in some places washed up corn and other seeds that had been recently planted. The next morning, at Canton and vicinity, a number of strange birds were found lying, or sitting on the ground, some of them dead and others crippled from being hurled against trees, houses and other obstacles. Again others were found apparently uninjured, although they seemed unable or indisposed to fly any considerable distance. Upwards of a hundred of these birds have been picked up, and, as they are entire strangers to the locality, the supposition is, that they were caught up on the sea coast by the wind and wafted this way. They are certainly a species of sea fowl, and resemble the penquin. They are about the size of the teal duck, have a head like the game chicken and a bill like the crow. Their legs are short and web-footed; their wings are also short. The feathers on the neck and back are black and dark green, while those on the breast are a bright silvery gray. The birds have no tails, and the live ones were found either sitting up or waddling, and made no effort to fly.